


G. 12.22

OF THE  
**High Veneration**  
MAN'S INTELLECT  
OWES TO  
**GOD;**

Peculiarly for His  
  
**Wisdom and Power.**

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By a Fellow of the *Royal Society.*

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## Advertisements.

**T**He abrupt beginning of the following Paper will not ('tis hop'd) be wonder'd at, when 'tis declar'd, that the whole Excursion is to be look'd upon as a Fragment of a Discourse, from which, for certain Reasons, it has been separated in its present Form. In which it ought to pass but for a rough Draught, the Nobleness, Sublimity and Sacredness of the Subject, not allowing the Authour to presume, that the first thoughts he committed to Paper about it, might be for good and all parted with by him, till he shall have heedfully revis'd and corrected them; and left in them as few faults, as the disproportion of so vast and sublime a Subject to his slender abilities, will permit. The loose

## Advertisements.

*sheets this Paper consists of, having been written at somewhat distant times and places, and hastily tack'd together; so that when the latter sheets were penning the former were often not at hand: 'tis hop'd that if some few things should chance to be either misplaced or repeated, the fault will be thought venial, and be more easily excused than it could in the Authour's Circumstances be avoided. And lastly; notice is to be given, that those other long Passages that are included in*  
★ Paratheses, may with the Authour's consent (or rather by his desire) be skip'd over; being but Conjectural thoughts, written and inserted for the sake of a Virtuoso, that is a great Friend to such kind of adventurous speculations.

\* Such figures as these. [ ]

OF THE  
High Veneration

Man's Intellect owes to

G O D.

I. **U**PON this Occasion I shall  
take leave to declare, that  
'tis not without some In-  
dignation, as well as Wonder, that  
I see *many* men, and *some* of them  
Divines too, who little considering  
what God is, and what themselves  
are, presume to talk of Him and his  
Attributes as freely and as unpreme-  
ditately, as if they were talking of a  
Geometrical Figure, or a Mechanical  
Engine. So that even the less Pre-  
sumptuous discourse, as if the Nature  
B and

## *Of the High Veneration*

and Perfections of that unparalleled Being, were Objects that their Intellects can grasp; and scruple not to dogmatize about those Abstruse Subjects, as freely as about other things, that are confessedly within the reach of humane Reason, or perhaps are to be found among the more familiar Objects of Sense.

2. The presumption and inconsiderateness of these men might be manifested by divers Considerations, if I had Leisure to insist on them; but at present I shall employ but these two; 1. That 'tis probable God may have divers Attributes, and consequently Perfections, that are as yet unknown to us; and 2<sup>ly</sup>, That of those Attributes that we have already some Knowledge of, there are Effects and Properties whose Sublimity or Abstruseness surpassing our Comprehension, makes the Divine Cause or Author of them deserve our Highest Wonder and Veneration.

3. To begin with the first of these; whereas there are two chief ways to arrive at the Knowledge of God's  
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Attributes; The Contemplation of his Works, and the study of his Word; I think it may be doubted whether either or both of these, will suffice to acquaint us with all his Perfections.

4. For, first, *though* Philosophers have rationally deduc'd, the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God from those Impresses of them that he hath stamp't upon divers of his Visible Works; yet since the Divine Attributes which the Creatures point at, are those whereof themselves have some, though but imperfect, participation, or resemblance: And since the Fœcundity (if I may so speak) of the Divine Nature is such, that its Excellencies may be participated or represented in I know not how many ways; how can we be sure that so perfect and exuberant a Being may not have Excellencies, that it hath not expressed or adumbrated in the Visible World, or any parts of it that are known to us?

5. This will be the more easily granted if we consider, that there are some of those Divine Attributes we



*do know*; which being Relative to the **Creatures**, could scarce, if at all, be discovered by such imperfect Intellects as ours, save by the consideration of some things *actually done* by God. As, supposing that just before the Foundations of the visible World were laid, the Angels were not more knowing than men now are, they could scarce think that there was in God a Power of Creating Matter (which few, if any at all of the *Peripateticks*, *Epicureans*, to omit others of the Ancient Philosophers, seem ever to have dreamt of) and of producing in it Local Motion, especially considering the puzzling difficulties that attend the Conception of the very Nature and Being of the one, and of the other. And much less (as far as we can conjecture) could the Angels spoken of, have known how the rational Soul and Humane Body act upon one another. Whence it seems probable, that if God have made other Worlds, or rather *Vortices*, than that which we live in, and are surrounded by, (as who  
can

can assure us that he hath not?) he may have displayed in some of the Creatures that compose *them*, divers Attributes that we have not discover'd by the help of those Works of his that *we* are acquainted with. But of this more hereafter.

6. I readily grant, (that I may proceed now to the *second* Help to acquire the Knowledge of the Divine Attributes) that the Revelations God hath vouchsafed us in the Holy Scripture (which we owe to that *Spirit* which *searcheth all things even τὰ* I Cor. II. Βυθὸν τῆς Θεότητος, the Depths of God) have <sup>10.</sup> clearly taught us divers things concerning their adorable Authour, which the mere Light of Nature either would not have shewn us at all, or would have but very dimly discovered to us. But the Scripture tells us indeed, that the Promulgators of the Gospel declared to men <sup>the</sup> AA. XX. *whole Counsel of God* (as far as was <sup>27.</sup> necessary for their Salvation) but never says, that they disclosed to them, *the whole Nature of God*; who I Tim. VI. is said to *inhabite an unapproachable* <sup>16.</sup>

*Light*, which humane Speculations cannot penetrate. Upon which score perhaps it was, that the Jews would have the proper Name of God to be Ineffable, to signify, that his Nature is Incomprehensible. And, though I will not adopt their Opinion, yet I cannot but take notice, that 'tis at least no mere Talmudical Tradition, since we find not, that either our Saviour himself, or his Apostles (who are introduced so frequently making mention of God in the New Testament) expressed in speaking either *to* him, or *of* him, the *Nomen Tetragrammaton* (or four-letter'd name!) But not to insist on Conjectures; the Scripture it self that brings so much Light to things Divine, that the Gospel is called *Light* in the Abstract, the Scripture, I say, informs us, that in this Life *we know but in part, and see things but darkly as in a Glass*; and that we are so far from being able *to find out God to perfection*, as to his Nature and Attributes, that even the ways of his Providence are to us *untraceable*.

1 Cor.  
XIII. 12.

Job XI. 7.

Rom. XI.  
33.

7. These

7. These are some of the Considerations that inclined me to think that God may have Attributes that are not known to us. And this Opinion perhaps will appear the more allowable, because of what I am going to add in answer to a weighty Objection. For I know it may be alledged, that besides the two ways I have mentioned of attaining to the knowledge of God's Attributes, there may be a third way preferable to both the others, and that is, by considering the *Idea* of a *Being* supremely or *Infintely* perfect; in which *Idea* it may be alledg'd, that all possible Perfections are contained; so that no new one can be added to it. But though I readily grant, that this *Idea* is the most genuine that I am able to frame of the Deity; yet there may be divers Attributes which though they are indeed in a general way *contained* in this *Idea*, are not in particular *discovered* to us by it. 'Tis true that when, by any means whatsoever, any Divine Perfection comes to our Knowledge, we may



well conclude, that 'tis in a sense comprized in the comprehensive Notion we have of a Being absolutely perfect; but 'tis possible that That Perfection would never have come to our knowledge, by the bare contemplation of that general *Idea*, but was suggested by Particularities; so that such Discoveries are not so much *deriv'd from*, as *refer'd to*, the Notion we are speaking of.

The past Considerations have, I presume, persuaded you, that God may have, as divers Attributes, so divers Excellencies and Perfections, that are not known to us. It will therefore now be seasonable to Indea-  
vour to shew you, that of divers of the Attributes *we do know* that he hath, we men have but an imperfect knowledge; especially in comparison of that He has of them. Which is not to be wondred at: since he possesses them in a manner or a degree peculiar to himself, and far transcending that wherein we men possess them, or rather some faint resemblances of them.



It would be very unsutable to my intended Brevity, and more disproportionate to my small abilities, to attempt the making this Good by insisting particularly on all the divine Excellencies that we are in some measure acquainted with. I therefore hope it may suffice to instance in a couple of the most known ones; God's Power, and his Wisdom. Which two I pitch upon, as being those that men are wont to look on as the Principal, and for which they have the greatest admiration and respect, because we are not able to confer them on our selves; as we think we can divers other Vertues and Perfections. For every man easily believes that he may be as *Chaste*, as *Temperate*, as *Just*, and in a word, as *Good*, as he pleases; those Vertues depending on his own will; but he is sensible that he cannot be as *Knowing*, as *Wise*, and as *Powerfull*, as he would. And thence he not Irrationally concludes, that *Power* and *Wisdom* flow from, and Argue, an Excellency and Superiority of Nature  
or

or Condition. The Power and Wisdom of God display themselves by what he does in reference both to his Corporeal, and his Incorporeal Creatures.

Among the manifold effects of the Divine Power, my intended Brevity will allow me to mention onely two or three, which, though to discerning eyes they be very manifest, are not wont to be very attentively reflected on. The *Immense Quantity* of Corporeal Substance that the Divine Power provided for the framing of the Universe; and the *great force* of the Local Motion that was imparted to it, and is *regulated* in it.

And first; the *vastness* of that huge Mass of matter that the Corporeal World consists of, cannot but appear stupendous to those that skillfully contemplate it. That part of the Universe which has been already discovered by Humane eyes, assisted with dioptrical Glasses, is almost unconceivably Vast: as will be easily granted, if we assent to what the best Astronomers, as well Modern as

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Ancient, scruple not to deliver. The fixt Stars of the first Magnitude, that to vulgar eyes look but like shining Spangles, are by Artists affirmed to exceed, each of them, above a hundred times in bigness the whole Globe of the Earth: and as little as these twinkling Stars appear to our naked eyes, they do (which probably you will think strange) appear much lesser through our Telescopes; which taking off those false lights that make them look to our maimed Sight as they are wont to be painted, shew them little otherwise than as specks or Physical points of light. And the Sun, which is granted to be some millions of miles nearer to us than the other fixt Stars are, though it seem at this lesser distance not to be half a foot broad; is by the generality of Mathematicians believ'd to be above a hundred and threescore times bigger than the Earth. Nay, according to the more recent calculations of some more accurate Modern Artists, 'tis estimated to be eight or ten thousand times as big as the Terraqueous  
Globe,

Globe, and by farther Observation may perhaps be found yet much vaster. And it plainly appears by the *Parallaxes* and other proofs, that this Globe of Earth and Water that we Inhabit, and often call *the World*; though it be divided into so many great Empires, and Kingdoms, and Seas, and though according to the received Opinion it be 5400 German leagues in Circuit, and consequently contain 10, 882, 080, 000. Cubick miles in solid measure, and according to the more modern observations have a greater Circumference (amounting to above 26000 miles:) yet this Globe, I say, is so far from being for its bulk, a considerable part of the Universe, that without much Hyperbole we may say that 'tis in comparison thereof but a Physical point. Nay those far greater Globes, of the Sun and other fixt Stars, and all the solid masses of the World to boot, if they were reduced into one, would perhaps bear a less proportion to the fluid part of the Universe, than a Nut to the Ocean. Which brings into  
my



my mind the sentence of an Excellent modern Astronomer, that the Stars of the Skie, if they were crouded into one Body and placed where the Earth is, would, if that Globe were placed at a fit distance, appear to us no bigger than a Star of the first Magnitude now does. And after all this I must remind you, that I have been hitherto speaking but of that part of the Corporeal Universe that has been already seen by us. And therefore I must add that as vast as this is, yet all that the eye, even when powerfully promoted by prospective Tubes, hath discovered to us, is far from representing the World of so great an Extent, as I doubt not but more perfect Telescopes hereafter will do. And even then the visible part of the *World* will be far enough from reaching to the *bounds* of the *Universe*: to which the Cartesians and some other modern Philosophers will not allow men to set any; holding the Corporeal World to be (as they love to speak) *Indefinite*, and beyond any bounds assignable by us men.

8. From



8. From the vast *extent* of the Universe, I now proceed to consider the stupendious *quantity of local Motion*, that the Divine power has given the parts of it, and continually maintains in it. Of this we may make some estimate by considering with what velocity some of the greater bodies themselves are mov'd, and how great a part of the remaining bodies of the Universe, is also, though in a somewhat differing way, indow'd with motion.

As for the first of these; the least velocity that I shall mention, is that which is afforded by the Copernican *Hypothesis*: since according to that 'tis the Earth that moves from West to East about its own *Axis*; (for its other motions concern not this discourse) in four and twenty hours. And yet this Terraqueous Globe which we think so great that we commonly call it the World, and which, as was lately noted, by the recenter computations of Mathematicians is concluded to contain six or seven and twenty thousand miles in Circuit;

Circuit ; some part of this Globe, I say, moves at such a rate, that the learned *Gassendus* confesses, that a point or place, situated in the *Æquator* of the Earth, does in a *second minute* move about *two hundred Toises* or Fathoms ; that is, *twelve hundred feet* : so that a Bullet when shot out of a Cannon, scarce flies with so great a Celerity.

9. But, as I was saying, the motion of the Earth is the least swift that I had to mention ; being indeed scarce comparable to the velocity of the fixt Stars ; if, with the generality of Astronomers, we suppose them to move in four and twenty hours about the Earth. For supposing the distance assign'd by the famous *Tycho* (a more accurate Observer than his Predecessours) between us and the Firmament to be fourteen thousand semediameters of the Earth, a fixt Star in the *Æquator*, does, as *Mullerius* calculates it, move 3153333 miles in an *hour*, and consequently in a *minute* of an hour, fifty two thousand five hundred fifty five miles, and  
in

a *second* (which is reckon'd to be near about a single pulsation or stroke of the artery of a healthy man) 875 miles: which is about, if not above, three thousand times faster than a Cannon bullet moves in the Air. 'Tis true that according to the Ptolomean *Hypothesis*, a fixt Star in the *Æquinoctial* doth in a second move at most

See Ricciol.  
Almag.  
nov. lib.  
IX. Sect.  
IV. Cap. VI.

but three semediameters of the Earth; but according to the learned and diligent *Ricciolus*, this velocity (of our fixt Stars) is fifty times greater than in the Ptolomean *Hypothesis*; and threescore and ten times greater than in the Tichonian *Hypothesis*. For according to *Ricciolus*, such a fixt Star as we speak of, moves in a second minute (or one beating of the pulse) 157282 German leagues which amount to six hundred twenty nine thousand one hundred twenty eight English miles.

And now I shall add (what possibly you have not observ'd) that That portion of the Universe which commonly passes for *quiescent*, and yet has motion put into it; is so great

great, that for ought I know, the quantity of *motion* distributed among these seemingly quiescent bodies, may equall if not exceed the quantity of motion the first Mover has communicated to the fixt Stars themselves, though we suppose them whirl'd about the Earth with that stupendious swiftness that the Ptolemeans and Tychonians attribute to them. For I reckon that the fixt Stars and Planets, or if you please, all the *mundane Globes*, whether *lucid* or *opacous*, of which last sort is the Earth, do all of them together bear but a small proportion to the *Interstellar* part of the *Universe*. And though I should allow *all* these Globes to be *solid*, notwithstanding that it can scarce be prov'd of *any* of them; and the Cartesians think the Sun (which they take to be a fixt Star, and therefore probably of the same Nature with the rest) to be extremely *fluid*: though I should, I say, grant this; yet it must be confess'd, that each of these solid Globes swims in an ambient fluid of very much greater ex-

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tent than it self is. So that the *fluid portion* of the Universe will in bulk almost incomparably exceed the *solid*. And if we consider what is the Nature of a *fluid* body, as such we shall find that it consists in having it's minute parts perpetually and variously mov'd, some this way and some that way ; so that though the whole body of a liquor seems to be at rest, yet the minute parts that compose that liquor, are in a restless motion ; continually shifting places amongst themselves, as has been amply shewn in a late Tract intituled, the *History of Fluidity and Firmness*.

10. And because the quantity of motion shar'd by the Corpuscles that compose fluid bodies is not usually reflected on even by Philosophers ; 'twill not be here amiss to add that how great and vehement a motion the parts of fluid bodies (perhaps when the Aggregates of those particles appear quiescent) may be endowed with, we may be assisted to guess, by observing them when their ordinary Motions happen to be disturb'd



sturb'd, or to be extraordinarily excited by fit conjunctures of circumstances. This may be observed in the strange force and effects of boisterous Winds and Whirlewinds, which yet are but Streams and Whirlepoools of the invisible Air, whose singly insensible parts are by accidental causes determined to have their Motion made either in a streight or almost streight-line, or as it were about a common Centre. But an instance much more conspicuous may be afforded by a Mine charged with Gunpowder; where the flame or some subtile Æthereal substance that is always at hand in the Air, though both one and the other of them be a fluid body, and the powder perhaps be kindled but by one spark of fire, exerts a Motion so rapid and furious, as in a trice is able to toss up into the Air, whole houses and thick Walls; together with the firm soil, or perchance solid Rocks, they were built upon.

II. But since the velocity of these discharged flames may be guess'd at,

by that which the flame of Gunpowder impresses on a Bullet shot out of a well charg'd Gun, which the diligent *Mersennus*, who made several trials to measure it, defines to be about 75 *toises*, or fathoms (that is, 450 foot) in a Second, being the 60th part of a Minute: if we admit the probable Opinion of the Cartesians, that the Earth and divers other Mundane Globes, as the Planets, are turn'd about their own Axes by the Motion of the respective *Aethereal Vortices* or Whirlepoools, in which they swim, we shall easily grant that the Motion of the Celestial Matter that moves, for instance, upon the remote Confines of the Earths *Vortex*, is by a vast excess more rapid than that of the surface of the Earth. And yet we formerly observ'd, that a place situated under the *Aequator* does (if the Earth turns about its own *Axis*) move as swiftly as a Bullet shot out of a Cannon. But if we chuse rather the *Tychonian Hypothesis*, which makes the Firmament with all the vast Globes of Light that adorn it to move about their

their common Centre in 24 hours, the Motions of the Celestial Matter must be allowed a far greater, and indeed a scarce imaginable rapidity.

These things are mention'd, that we may have the more enlarg'd Conceptions of the *Power* as well as *Wisdom* of the Great Creator, who has both put so Wonderfull a quantity of Motion into the Univerſal Matter and maintains it therein, and is able, not onely to ſet bounds to the raging Sea, and effectually ſay to it, Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no farther, and here ſhall thy proud Waves be ſtay'd, but, (what is far more) ſo to curb and moderate thoſe ſtupendiously rapid Motions of the Mundane Globes and intercurrent Fluids, that neither the unwealdineſs of their Bulk, nor Celerity of their Motions, have made them exorbitate or fly out, and this for many Ages; during which no Watch for a few hours, has gone ſo regularly. The Sun, for inſtance, moving without ſwerving, under the ſame Circular Line that is call'd the *Ecliptick*. And if the Firmament it

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ſelf,

self, whose Motion in the vulgar *Hypothesis* is by much the most rapid in the World, do fail of exactly completing its revolution in 24 hours, that retardation is so regulated that since *Hipparchus's* time, who liv'd 2000 years ago, the first Star in *Aries*, which was then near the beginning of it, is not yet come to the last degree of that Sign.

12. After what hath been discoursed of the Power of God, it remains, that I say something about his Wisdom, that being the Attribute to which those that have elevated understandings, are wont to pay the Highest Veneration, when they meet it even in Men, where yet 'tis still but very Imperfect.

Eph. III. 40. The Wisdom of God which Saint *Paul* somewhere justly styles *πολυποίκιλος*, manifold or *multifarious*, is express'd in two differing manners or degrees. For sometimes it is so manifestly display'd in familiar Objects, that even superficial and almost careless Spectators may take notice of it. But there are many other things wherein the  
*Treasures*



*Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge* Col. II. 3.

may be said to be hid; lying so deep that they require an Intelligent and attentive Considerer to discover them. But though I think I may be allowed, to make this distinction, yet I shall not solicitously confine my self to it; because in several things both these Expressions of the Divine Wisdom, may be clearly observ'd.

Those Objects of this Wisdom that we shall at this time consider are of two sorts, the material and visible, and the invisible and immaterial Creatures of God.

In the First of these, whose aggregate, or collection makes up the Corporeal World, commonly, call'd *Universe*, I shall briefly take notice, of the excellent Contrivance of particular bodies; of the great variety, and consequently number, of them; of their Symmetry, as they are parts of the World; and of the connexion and dependance they have in relation to one another. And though under the two first of these heads, I might as well as under the other two, take

notice of many inanimate bodies, as well as of those that are endowed with vegetative and sensitive Souls (as Naturalists commonly call them;) yet for Brevities sake I shall here take notice onely, of that more perfect sort of living Creatures that we call Animals.

13. I. The contrivance of every Animal, and especially of a Humane Body, is so curious and exquisite, that 'tis almost impossible for any Body, that has not seen a dissection well made and Anatomically considered, to imagine or conceive how much excellent Workmanship is display'd in that admirable Engine. But of this having discours'd elsewhere more fully, I shall here onely tell you in a word (and 'tis no *Hyperbole*) that as St. Paul said on another occasion. *That the foolish things of God are wiser than Men, and the weak things of God stronger than Men.* So we may say, that the meanest living Creatures of God's making, are far more wisely contrived, than the most excellent pieces of workmanship

1 Cor. I.  
25.

manship that Humane heads and hands can boast of. And no Watch nor Clock in the World, is any way comparable for exquisiteness of Mechanism, to the body of even an Ass or a Frog.

14. II. But God's Wisdom is recommended as well by the *Variety*, and consequently the *Number* of the kinds of living Creatures, as by the *Fabrick* of each of them in particular. For the skill of Humane Architects and other Artists is very narrow, and for the most part limited to one or to a few sorts of contrivements. Thus many an Architect can build a House well, that cannot build a Ship: and (as we daily see) a man may be an excellent Clock-maker, that could not make a good Watch, and much less contrive well a Fouling-piece, or a Wind-mill.

15. But now the Great Author of Nature has not onely created four Principal sorts of living Engins, namely Beasts, Birds, Fishes and Reptiles; which differ exceedingly from one another, as the several Regions  
or

or Stages where they were to act their parts, required they should do; but under each of these comprehensive *Genders* are compriz'd I know not how many subordinate *Species* of Animals, that differ exceedingly from others of the same kind, according to the Exigency of their Particular Natures. For not onely the Fabrick of a Beast (as a Lion) is very differing from that of a Bird, or a Fish, (as an Eagle or a Whale;) but in the same *Species* the Structure or Mechanism of particular Animals is very unlike. Witness the difference between the Parts of those Beasts that chew the Cud, and those that do not; and between the Hog and the Hare, especially in their Entrals; and so between a Parrot and a Batt, and likewise between a Whale, a Star-fish, a Lobster, and an Oyster, (to mention now no other Instances.) And if with divers Philosophers both Ancient and Modern, we admit *Vegetables*, into the rank of living Creatures; the Number of these being so great, that above six thousand kinds of Vegetables



bles were many years ago reckon'd up; the manifold displays of the Divine Mechanism, and so of its *Wisdom*, will by that great Variety of living Engines, be so much the more conspicuous.

16. III. That which much enhances the excellent Contrivances to be met with in these *Automata*, is the Symmetry of all the various parts that each of them consists of. For an Animal, though consider'd in his state of Intireness, he is justly look'd upon as one Engine; yet really this total Machine (if I may so call it) is a complex thing made up of several Parts, which consider'd separately may pass each of them for a subordinate Engine excellently fitted for this or that Particular Use. As an Eye is an admirable Optical Instrument to enable a Man to see; and the Hand is so well fram'd for a multitude of Mechanical uses, that *Aristotle* thought fit to call it the *Organ of Organs*, (or *Instrument of Instruments*.) It ought therefore highly to recommend the Wisdom of the Great *yotser hakkol*  
Former

JER. X. 16. *Former of all things* (as the Scripture styles him,) that he has so fram'd each Particular part of a Man (or other Animal,) as not to let the skill bestowed on that, hinder him from making that part or member it self, and every other, neither bigger nor less, nor (in a word) otherwise constituted, than was most expedient for the completeness and welfare of the whole Animal. Which manifests that this Great Artist had the whole Fabrick under his Eye at once; and did at one View behold all that was best to be done, in order to the completeness of the whole Animal, as well as to that of each member and other part, and admirably provided for them both at once. Whereas many an excellent Artificer, that is able to make a single Engine very complete, may not be able to make it a Commodious part of a Complex or Aggregate of Engins. As 'tis not every one that can make a good Pump, that can make a good Ship pump; nor every Chymist that can build an Oven for a Bake house, that can make one fit

fit to be set up in a Ship: and we see that our *Pendulum Clocks*, that are moved with weights, and go very regularly a-shore, cannot yet be brought to perform their Office (of constantly measuring of time) when set up in a sayling Ship.

17. IV. The fourth way by which God manifests his Wisdom in his Corporeal Creatures, is, their mutual usefulness to one another, in a relation either of dependency or of coordination. This serviceableness may be considered, either as the parts of the Animal have a relation to one another, and to the whole body they make up; or as intire and distinct bodies have reference to or dependency on each other. To the first sort of utility belong the uses of the parts of the Humane body, for instance; which are so fram'd, that besides these public Offices or Functions that some of them exercise for the good of the whole, as the Stomach for concocting aliments, the Brain for supplying Animal spirits to move the limbs, and other parts, the Kidneys to separate the  
super-

superfluous *Serum* of the Bloud; there are many other particular parts that have that subserviency to one another, that no despicable portion of the Books of Anatomy is employ'd in the mention of them. And divers Consents of parts, and utilities that accrue from one to the other, are farther discovered by Diseases, which primarily affecting one part or member of the Body, discover that this or that other part has a dependance on it, or a particular relation to it, though perhaps not formerly taken notice of. To the second part of utility belong those parts that discriminate the Sexes of Animals, which (parts) have such a relation one to another in the Male and the Female, that 'tis obvious they were made for the conjunction of both in order to the propagation of the *Species*. I cannot here spend time to consider the fitness of the Distance and Situation of the Sun, the obliquity of its Motion under the Ecliptick, and (especially) the compensations that Nature makes by one thing for another, the excess of whose qualities



lities would else be noxious to men, as the great heats and dryness that reign in many parts of the Torrid Zone and some neighbouring Climates, would render those Countries barren and uninhabitable, as the Ancients thought them, if they were not kept from being so, by the Etesians and the Trade-winds, which blow regularly (though not always the same way) for a great part of the hottest seasons of the Year, and are assisted by the length of the Nights, by the Copious and lasting Rains that fall at set times, by the greatness of the Rivers, (some of them periodically overflowing their banks to great distances) and by the winds that in many places blow in the Night from the Land Seaward, and in the Morning from the Sea towards the Land; for these, and some other such things, do so moisten and refresh the Ground, and contemperate the Air, that in many of those Climates which the Ancients thought parch'd up and uninhabitable, there are large Kingdoms and Provinces that are both fruitfull and

and Populous, and divers of them very pleasant too. But as I was saying, I cannot stay to prosecute what might be represented to shew the usefulness of many of God's other sensible works to the Noblest kind of them Men. But I shall rather content myself by adding a few lines, to point farther at the reference that God has been pleas'd to make many other things have to the welfare of Men and other Animals; as we see that according to the usual course of Nature, Lambs, Kids, and many other living Creatures, are brought into the World at the Spring of the Year; when tender Grass and other Nutritive plants are provided for their food. And the like may be observ'd in the production of Silk-worms, whose Eggs according to Nature's institution, are hatch'd when Mulbury Trees begin to Bud, and put forth those leaves whereon these pretious insects are to feed; the aliments being tender whilst the Worms themselves are so, and growing more strong and substantial, as the Insects increase in Vigour and Bulk.

18. There

18. *There* is one thing, which though it might perhaps have been more properly brought in before, must not here be pretermitted. For besides what was lately said of the excellent Fabrick of the bodies of Men and other Animals, we may deservedly take notice how much more wonderfull than the structure of the *grown body* must be the contrivance of a *Semen Animatum*: since all the future *parts*, (solid as well as soft,) and the *functions*, and many of the *Actions* (and those to be variable *pro re nata*) of the Animal to be produc'd, must be durably delineated, and as it were *couch'd* in a little portion of matter, that *seems* Homogeneous, and *is* unquestionably fluid. And that which much increases the Wonder, is, that one of these latent impressions or powers, namely the Plastick, or Prolifick, is to lye dormant perhaps above thirty or forty Years, and then to be able to produce many more such Engins as is the Animal it self.

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[I have hitherto, among the Corporeal Works of God, taken notice onely of those Productions of his Power and Wisdom that may be observ'd in *the visible World*. So that I may be allowed to consider farther, that not onely the Peripateticks, but the generality of other Philosophers, believe the World to be finite: and, though the Cartesians will not say it is so, but chuse rather to call it *indefinite*, yet as it is elsewhere shewn, their Opinion is rather a well meant piece of modesty, than a strict truth. For in reality, the World must every way have bounds, and consequently be finite, or it must not have bounds, and so be truly boundless, or, (which is the same thing in other terms) *infinite*. And if the World be bounded, then those that believe a Deity, to whose Nature it belongs to be of infinite Power, must not deny that God is, and still was, able to make other Worlds than this of ours. And the Epicureans, who admitted no *Omnipotent Maker*  
of



of the World, but substituted *Chance* and *Atomes* in his Stead, taught that by reason the causes sufficient to make a World, that is Atomes and Space, were not wanting; Chance has actually made many Worlds, of which ours is but one; and the Cartesians must, according to their Doctrine of the Indefiniteness of Corporeal Substance, admit that our visible World, or if they please, *Vortex*, by which I mean the greatest extent our eyes can reach to, is but a *part*, and comparatively but a very small one too, of the *whole Universe*: which may extend beyond the utmost Stars we can see, incomparably farther than those remotest visible bounds are distant from our Earth.

Now if we grant with some modern Philosophers, that God has made other Worlds besides this of ours, it will be highly probable that he has there display'd His manifold Wisdom, in productions very differing from those wherein we here admire it. And even without supposing any more than one Universe: as all that portion

of it that is visible to us, makes but a part of that vastly extended aggregate of bodies: So if we but suppose, that some of the Celestial Globes, whether visible to us, or plac'd beyond the reach of our sight, are peculiar Systemes, the consideration will not be very different. For since the fix'd Stars are many of them incomparably more remote than the Planets, 'tis not absurd to suppose that as the Sun, who is the fix'd Star nearest to us, has a whole Systeme of Planets that move about him, so some of the other fix'd Stars may be each of them the Centre, as it were, of another Systeme of Celestial Globes: since we see that some Planets themselves, that are determined by Astronomers to be much interior in bigness to those fix'd Stars I was speaking of, have other Globes that do as it were depend on them, and move about them; as, not to mention the Earth that has the Moon for its Attendant, nor *Saturn* that is not altogether unaccompanied, 'tis plain that *Jupiter* has no less than four *Satellites* that run their Courses about

about Him. And 'tis not to be pre-  
mitted, that none of these lesser  
and secondary Planets, (if I may so  
call them) that moves about *Saturn*  
and *Jupiter* is visible to the naked eye,  
and therefore they were all unknown  
to the Ancient Astronomers, who  
liv'd before the invention of Tele-  
scopes. Now, in case there be other  
Mundane Systemes (if I may so speak)  
besides this visible one of ours, I  
think it may be probably suppos'd that  
God may have given peculiar and ad-  
mirable instances of His inexhausted  
Wisdom in the Contrivance and  
Government of Systemes, that for  
ought we know may be fram'd and  
manag'd in a manner quite differing,  
from what is observ'd in that part of  
the Universe that is known to us.  
For besides that here on Earth the  
Loadstone is a Mineral so differing in  
divers affections, not onely from all  
other Stones, but from all other bo-  
dies, that are not Magnetical, that this  
Heteroclite Mineral scarce seems to  
be Originary of this World of ours,  
but to have come into it, by a re-

move from some other World or Systeme; I remember that some of the Navigators that discovered *America*, took notice that at their first coming into some parts of it, though they found great store of Animals and Plants, yet they met with few of the latter, and scarce any of the former, of the same Species with the living Creatures of *Europe*.

19. Now in these other Worlds; *besides* that we may suppose that the Original Fabrick, or that Frame into which the Omniscient Architect at first contriv'd the parts of their matter, was very differing from the structure of our Systeme; *besides* this, I say, we may conceive that there may be a vast difference betwixt the subsequent *Phænomena*, and productions observable in one of *those* Systemes, from what regularly happens in *ours*, though we should suppose no more, than that two or three Laws of Local Motion may be differing in those unknown Worlds, from the Laws that obtain in ours. For if we suppose, for instance, that every  
entire



entire Body, whether simple or compounded, great or small, retains always a motive Power, (as Philosophers commonly think that the Soul does, when it has mov'd the Humane Body; and as the Epicureans and many other Philosophers think all Atomes do, after they have impell'd one another) this power of exciting Motion in another Body, without the Movents loosing its own, will appear of such moment to those that duely consider, that Local Motion is the *first* and chiefest of the *second* causes that produce the *Phænomena* of Nature: that they will easily grant that these *Phænomena* must be strangely diversifyed, by springing from principal causes so very differing qualified. Nor (to add another way of varying Motion) is it absurd to conceive, that God may have created *some* parts of matter to be of themselves *quiescent*, (as the Cartesians and divers other Philosophers suppose all matter to be in its own Nature,) and determin'd to continue at rest till some outward Agent force it into Motion :

and yet that He may have endow'd *other* parts of the matter, with a Power like that which the Atomists, ascribe to their Principles, of restlessly moving themselves, without loosing that power by the motion they excite in quiescent bodies. And the Laws of this *propagation* of Motion among bodies, may be not the same with those that are established in our World: so that *but* one half, or some lesser part, (as a third,) of the Motion that is here communicated from a body of such a bulk and velocity, to another it finds at rest, or slower mov'd than it self, shall there pass from a Movent to the body it impells; though all circumstances, except the Laws of Motion, be suppos'd to be the same. Nor is it so extravagant a thing, as at first it may seem, to entertain such suspicions as these. For in the common Philosophy, besides that the Notion and Theory of Local Motion are but very imperfectly propos'd, there are Laws or Rules of it *well*, not to say *at all*, establish'd.

20. And as for the Cartesian Laws of Motion, though I know they are received by many learned Men, yet I suspect that it is rather upon the Authority of so famous a Mathematician as *Des-Cartes*, than any convictive evidence, that accompanies the Rules themselves: since to me (for Reasons that belong not to this Discourse,) some of them appear not to be befriended either by clear experience, or any Cogent Reason. And for the Rule that is the most usefull, namely that which asserts, *That there is always the same quantity of Motion in the World; every Body that moves another, loosing just as much of its own as it produces in the other*: the proof he offers, being drawn from the Immutability of God, seems very Metaphysical, and not very cogent to me; who fear that the Properties and Extent of the Divine Immutability, are not so well known to us Mortals, as to allow *Cartesius* to make it in our present case, an argument *à priori*. And *à posteriori* I see not how the Rule will

will be demonstrated: since, besides that it may be questioned whether 'tis agreeable to experience in divers instances that might be given of communicated Motions here below; I know not what experience we have of the Rules by which Motion is propagated in the Heavenly Regions of the World, among all the Bodies, that make up the *Ætherial*, (which is incomparably the greatest) part of the Universe. So that the truth of the Cartesian Rules being evinc'd neither *à priori*, nor *à posteriori*; it appears not why it should be thought unreasonable to imagine, *that other Systemes may have some peculiar Laws of Motion*; onely because they differ from those Cartesian Rules, whereof the greatest part are, at least undemonstrated.]

21. But *though*, if we allow of Suppositions and Conjectures, such as those lately mention'd, that are at least not absurd; they may conduce to amplify some of our *Idea's* of Divine things;



things; yet we need not fly to Imaginary ultra mundane Spaces, to be convinc'd that the Effects of the Power and Wisdom of God, are worthy of their Causes, and not near adequately understood by us; if with sufficient attention we consider that innumerable multitude, and unspeakable variety of bodies, that make up this vast Universe. For, there being among these a stupendious number, that may justly be look'd upon as so many distinct Engins, and many of them very complicated ones too, as containing sundry subordinate ones: to know that all these, as well as the rest of the Mundane matter, are every moment sustain'd, guided and govern'd, according to their respective Natures, and with an exact regard to the Catholick Laws of the Universe; to know, I say, that there is a Being that doeth this every where and every moment, and that manages all things without either aberration or intermission; is a thing, that if we attentively reflect on, ought to produce in us, for that Supreme Being that can  
doe

doe this, the highest Wonder, and the lowliest Adoration.

The Epicureans of old did with some colour of reason, as well as with much confidence, urge against the Belief of a Divine Providence, that 'tis unconceivable, and therefore incredible; That the Gods should be sufficient for such differing and distracting employments, as, according to the exigencies of Natures works, to make the Sun shine in one place, the Rain shower down in another, the Winds to blow in a third, the Lightning to flash in a fourth, the Thunderbolts to fall in a fifth; and in short, other bodies to act and suffer according to their respective Natures. Wherefore we, that upon good grounds believe that God *really does*, what these Philosophers thought *impossible to be done*, by any Agents whatsoever, are much wanting in our duty if we do not admire an Al-pervading Wisdom, that reaches to the utmost extent of the Universe, and actually *performing* what Philosophers profess'd they could not so much as *conceive*,  
highly

highly merits that those difficulties which they thought insuperable, and so, a sufficient excuse for their *unbelief*, should be a powerfull motive to our *veneration*, of that transcendent Wisdom, that without any trouble surmounts them.

22. We have seen some displays of God's Wisdom as well as Power, by what we have observ'd in his Corporeal Works. *But* 'twill be easily granted, that some of the Divine Perfections, could not be so well express'd or Copied upon Corporeal creatures, as upon the Rational and immaterial soul of Man, and other Intellectual Beings: as the picture of an Apple or a Cherry, or the character of a Number, is not capable of receiving or containing so much of an excellent Painter's skill, as he may exhibite in a Piece wherein the passions of the mind, and the Laws of Opticks, and of decency, may be fully express'd. And it may well be presum'd, that if we were as familiarly acquainted with God's Incorporeal creatures as we are with his visible

ble ones, we should perceive, that as Spirits are incomparably more Noble than bodies ; so the Divine Wisdom employ'd in the Government and Conduct of them, is more glorious than that which we justly admire in the frame and management of his Corporeal Works. And indeed let a Portion of Matter be never so fine, and never so well contriv'd, it will not be any more than an Engine devoid of Intellect and Will, truly so call'd, and whose excellency, as well as its distinction from other bodies even the grossest and imperfectest, can consist but in Mechanical affections, such as the size, shape, motion and connexion of its parts : which can neither excite themselves into motion, nor regulate and stop the motion they once are in. Whereas true Spirits, (by which I here mean *immaterial* Substances,) have by God's Appointment belonging to their Nature, Understanding, Will, and an Internal Principle, both of acting so and so, and of Arbitrarily ceasing from action. And *though* God, as the Sole Creator  
of



of all Substances, has, and if He please may exercise, an absolute Dominion over all his Creatures, as well Immaterial as Corporeal; yet since He has thought fit to govern Spirits according to the Nature He has given them, (which Comprehends both Understanding and Will;) to create such Intelligent Free, and Powerfull Beings, as good and bad Angels, (to say nothing now of men) and to govern them on those Terms so as effectually to make them (however they behave themselves,) Instruments of His Glory, which multitudes of them do as subtilly, as obstinately oppose; to doe these things, I say, requires a Wisdom and Providence, transcending any that can be display'd in the formation and management of merely Corporeal Beings. For inanimate Engins may be so contriv'd, as to Act but as we please, whereas Angels and Humane Souls are endow'd with a freedom of acting, in most cases, as themselves please. And 'tis far easier for a skilfull Watch-maker, to regulate the Motions of his Watch than

than the affections and actions of his Son.

23. And here give me leave to consider, that Angels whether good or bad, are very Intelligent and active Beings; and that each of them is endowed with an Intellect capable of almost Innumerable Notions, and degrees, or variations of knowledge, and also with a Will, capable of no less numerous Exertions or Acts; and of having various Influences upon the Understanding, as (on the other side) it is variously affected by the Dictates of it. So that, (to apply this consideration to my present purpose) each particular Angel being successively capable of so many differing *Moral States*; may be look'd upon, as, in a manner, a distinct *Species* of the Intellectual kind. And the government of one Daemon, may be as difficult a work, and consequently may as much declare the Wisdom and Power of God, as the government of a whole *Species* of inanimate bodies, such as Stones or Metals: whose Nature determines them to a strict conformity to

to those primordial Laws of Motion, which were once settled by the great Creatour, and from which, they have no Wills of their own to make them swerve.

The Scripture tells us, that in the Oeconomy of Man's Salvation, there is so much of the *manifold Wisdom of God* express'd, that the *Angels themselves desire to pry into those mysteries*. When our Saviour, having told his Apostles that the day and hour of his future coming to Judgment (whether of the Jewish Nation or the World, I now enquire not) was not then known to any; subjoyns, *no, not to the Angels of Heaven, but to his Father onely*: he sufficiently intimates them to be endowed with excellent *Knowledge*, Superiour to that of Men: and that perhaps may be one of the Reasons why the Scripture styles them *Angels of Light*. It also teaches us that the good Angels are vastly numerous, and that as they are of differing Orders; some of them being Arch-Angels, and some Princes of particular Empires

Matt. 24.  
36.

or Nations : so that God assigns them very differing and important Employments both in Heaven and in Earth ; and sometimes such as oblige them, in discharge of their respective Trusts, to endeavour the carrying on of Interfering designs. The same Scripture by speaking of the Devil and *his Angels*, and of the *Great Dragon* that drew down with his Tail the third part of the Stars from Heaven to Earth, and by mentioning a whole *Legion of Devils* that possessed a single Man ; and by divers other passages that I shall not now insist on, giving us ground to conclude, *that* there is a Political government in the kingdom of darkness ; *that* the Monarch of it is exceeding powerfull, whence he is styl'd the Prince of this World, and some of his officers have the titles of principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this World, &c. *that* the subjects of it are exceeding numerous ; *that* they are desperate enemies to God and Men, whence the Devil is styl'd the *Adversary*, the *Tempter*, and a *Murtherer* from the beginning ;  
*that*

Eph. VI.  
 12.



*that they are very false and crafty, whence the Devil is call'd the Father of Lies, the Old Serpent; and his stratagems are styl'd the Wiles, and Depths of Satan; that their malice is as active and restless, as 'tis great, whence, we are told that our Adversary the Devil walks about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

1 Pet. V. 8.

These things being taught us in the Scripture it self, though I shall not now add any of the Inferences that may be drawn from them to my present purpose, we may rationally suppose, that if we were quick-sighted enough to discern the Methods of the Divine Wisdom in the Government of the Angelical and of the Diabolical Worlds, or great Communities, if I may so call them; we should be ravish'd into admiration how such Intelligent, Free, Powerfull, and Immortal Agents, should be without violence offer'd to their Nature, made in various manners to conspire to fulfill the Laws, or at least accomplish the Ends, of that great *Theocracy*, that does not alone reach to all kinds of bodies, to

Men, and to this or that rank of Spirits, but comprises the whole Creation, or the great Aggregate of all the Creatures of God. And indeed to make the voluntary, and perhaps the most crafty actions of evil Men, and of evil Spirits themselves, subservient to his Wise and Just Ends; does no less recommend the Wisdom of God, than it would the skill of a Shipwright and Pilot, if he was able to contrive and steer his Ship, so, as to sail to his designed Port, not onely with a side-wind, or very near a wind, as many doe; but with a quite contrary wind, and that a tempestuous one too.

24. Perhaps you will think it allowable, that on this Occasion I antedate what in due time will infallibly come to pass; and now briefly take some notice, as if it were present, of the diffused and illustrious manifestation of the Divine Wisdom, (as well as Justice and Mercy,) that will gloriously appear at the day of the general Judgment, when every good Christians eyes *shall* be vouchsafed

safer a much larger prospect than that which his Saviour himself had, when he survey'd in a trice, and as it were at one view, *all the Kingdoms of the World*; and *shall* behold a much more numerous (not to say numberless) Assembly, than that which is said to have consisted of *all People, Nations and Languages*, that flock'd in to the Dedication of *Nebuchadnezar's Golden Image*. Luk. IV. 5.  
Dan. III.

At that great decretory Day, *when* the whole Off-spring of *Adam*, shall by the loud voice and trumpet of the Arch-Angel be call'd together, from the remotest Ages and the distantest Climates in the World: *when*, I say, besides the fallen Angels, all the Humane Actours that ever liv'd, shall appear upon the Stage at once: *when the dead shall be rais'd, and the Books shall be open'd*: (that is, the Records of Heaven and of Conscience) *Then* the Wisdom of God will shine forth in its Meridian lustre, and its full splendour. Not onely the Occurrences that relate to the lives and actions of particular Persons, or of private Fa-

milies, and other lesser Societies of Men; will be there found not to have been overlook'd by the Divine Providence; but the Fates of Kingdoms and Commonwealths, and the Revolutions of Nations and of Empires, will appear to have been order'd and over-rul'd by an incomparable Wisdom. And those great Politicians, that thought to out-wit Providence, by their refin'd subtilties, shall find themselves *taken in their own craftiness*; shall have their deepest *Counsels turn'd into foolishness*; and shall not be able to keep the amaz'd World from discovering, that whilst they thought they most craftily pursu'd their own Ends, they really accomplish'd God's. And those subtile Hypocrites that thought to make pretended Religion the Instrument of their Secular Designs, shall find those Designs both defeated, and made truly subservient to that advancement of Religion, which they really never aim'd at.

25. To employ and keep in Order a very complicated Engine, such as the famous *Strasburg's Clock*, or a  
Man



Man of War, though all the parts of it be inanimate and devoid of purposes and ends of their own, is justly counted a piece of skill. And this Task is more difficult, and consequently does recommend the conduct of the Performer, in proportion to the intricate structure, and the number of pieces whereof the Engine consists. At which rate how astonishing and ravishing will appear that Wisdom and Providence that is able to Guide and Over-rule many thousand Millions of Engins endow'd with Wills, so as to make them all be found in the final Issues of things, subservient to purposes worthy of Divine Providence, Holiness, Justice and Goodness.

In short, *when* all the Actours that had their parts in this World, shall appear at once upon the Stage; *when* all Disguises shall be stript off, all Intrigues discover'd, all hearts and Designs laid *open*, *then* to find that this whole amazing *Opera*, that has been acting upon the face of the Earth, from the beginning to the end

of Time, has been so contrived and carried on by the Great Authour of the World and of Men, that their innumerably various actions, and cross designs are brought, (commonly without, and often against their wills,) to conspire to the accomplishment of a Plot worthy of God; will appear an Effect of so vast and so all-pervading a Wisdom, as Humane Intellects will admiringly confess, that nothing but a Divine and Omniscient One could compass.

26. 'Tis like you may have taken notice, that among the several Instances I have given of the Wisdom of God, I have not, (unless perhaps incidentally and transiently,) mention'd the Oeconomy of Man's Salvation by Jesus Christ. And therefore I think my self oblig'd to advertise you, that *though*, for Reasons to be given you, if you desire it, by word of mouth, I have thought fit, That Subject, which has been already handled by so many *profess'd Divines*, should be left untreated of by *me*, who am a Layman; yet I did not pretermitt it,  
upon

upon the score of thinking it at all Inferiour to those other Manifestations of God's Wisdom, that I expressly discourse of.

For I think that in the Redemption of Mankind, more of the Divine Attributes than are commonly taken notice of, have their distinct Agencies; and that their Co-operation is so admirably directed by the Divine Wisdom, that an Apostle may very justly call it the *great mystery of Godliness*; <sup>1 Tim. III.</sup> and that it no less deserves our Wonder, <sup>16.</sup> than our Gratitude.

27. I am not ignorant that many learned Divines, have largely, and some of them laudably, treated of this Subject. But I confess I doubt whether most of them have not been more happy in their Care to *avoid errors* about it, than skilfull in their attempts, to *unveil* the *mysteries* couch'd in it. There are in the great work of Man's Redemption, some characters and footsteps of the Divine Wisdom, so conspicuous, not to say so refulgent, that a Believer endow'd but with a mediocrity of parts, may easily

Εὐχ. 78  
Θεῶν.  
1 Cor. II.  
10. II. 7.

easily enough discern them. But there are also in this sublime and comprehensive work, some *depths of God*, (to use a Scripture phrase) and so much of the *Wisdom of God in a Mystery*, (that is, of the *Mysterious Wisdom of God*) that I cannot think it an easie matter to have a mental Eye, so inlightned and so piercing, as to treat largely and worthily of so vast and abstruse a Subject. And indeed when I consider, that a Man must know much of the Nature of Spirits in general, and even of the Father of them, God himself, of the Intellect, Will, &c. of the Soul of Man, of the State of *Adam* in Paradise, and after his fall, of the influence of his fall upon his Posterity, of the Natural or Arbitrary vindictive Justice of God, of the Grounds and Ends of God's inflicting Punishments as a Creditour, a Ruler, or both; of the admirable and unparallel'd Person of Christ the Mediatour; of those Qualifications and Offices that are required to fit him, for being lapsed Man's Redeemer, of the Nature of Covenants, and the  
Con-



Conditions of those God vouchsaf'd to make with Man, whether of Works, or Grace; of the Divine Decrees, in reference to Man's final State; of the secret and powerfull Operations of Grace upon the mind, and the manner by which the Spirit of God works upon the Souls of Men, that He converts, and brings by Sanctification to Glory. To be short, there are so many Points (for I have left divers unnam'd) most of them of difficult speculation, that are fit to be discuss'd by him that would solidly and fully treat of the Worlds Redemption by *Jesus Christ*, that when I reflect on them, I am ready to exclaim with *St. Paul, who is sufficient for these things*; and I am so far from wondering, that the generality of Divines and other Writers on this Subject, have not fully display'd the Wisdom that God has express'd in this great work, that to have been able to accomplish it in so admirable a way, as God has actually contriv'd and made choice of, is one of the chief Reasons of my Admiration of  
the

the Wisdom it self. And I am persuaded, that for God to reconcile his inflexible Justice, his exuberant Mercy, and all those other things that seem'd to clash inevitably about the design'd Salvation of Men, and make them co-operate to it; is a stupendious manifestation of Wisdom: there being no Probleme in *Diophantus*, *Alexandrinus*, or *Apollo-nius Pergæus*, in Algebra, or in Geometry, near so difficult to be solv'd, or that requires, that a greater number of proportions and congruities should be attended to at once, and made subservient to the same Ends; as that Great Probleme propounded by God's Infinite Goodness to his Divine Wisdom; the Redemption of lost and perverse Mankind, upon the Terms declar'd in the Gospel, which are admirably fitted to promote at once, God's Glory, and Man's felicity.

28. Though what has been said of the Greatness of God's Power and Wisdom, may justly persuade us that those Attributes are Divine and  
Ado.

Adorable; yet I must not deny that the Representation that I have made of them, is upon several accounts, very disadvantageous. For *first*, there has not been said of them in this paper all that even I could have mention'd, to set forth their excellency; because I had elsewhere treated of that Subject, and was more willing to present you with some things I had not said before, than trouble you with many repetitions. But if instead of so unfit a Person as I, the manifestation of the Divine Wisdom had been undertaken by the knowingest Man in the World, or perhaps even by an Angel, he would find himself unable fully to make out the matchless Excellency of it. For how much Wisdom has been exercis'd by an Omniscient Being, cannot be fully comprehended or, consequently, describ'd, but by an infinite understanding. *Besides*, I have considered the Wisdom display'd by God in the Works of His Creation and Providence, with respect to *them* not to *us*. For they are excellent, absolutely,

ly, and in their own Nature, and would simply upon that account deserve the wonder and the praises of Rational Beings, as they are rational: as *Zenxis* justly celebrated the skill of *Appelles*, and modern Geometers and Mechanicians admire *Archimedes*. But in this irrelative contemplation of God's Works, a Man's mind being intent onely upon the excellencies he discovers in them, He is not near so much affected with a just sense of the inferiority of His to the Divine Intellect, as He would be if He heedfully consider how much of the vast Subjects He contemplates, are undiscovered by Him, and how dimm and imperfect the Knowledge is, which He has of that little He does discover. And now, (*lastly*) to the other disadvantages with which I have been reduc'd to *represent* (and so to blemish.) the Divine Attributes; I must add, that I have insisted but upon *two* of them, God's *Power* and His *Wisdom*, whereas we know that He has divers other perfections, as (besides those Incommunicable ones, His, Self-



Self-experience, Self-sufficiency, and Independency) His Goodness to all His Creatures, His Mercy to sinfull Men, His Justice, His Veracity, &c. And as I long since noted, we may rationally conceive, that He may have divers Attributes and consequently divers Perfections, whereof we have at present no *Knowledge*, or perhaps so much as particular *conjecture*, the inexhaustible Fecundity of the Divine Nature being such, that for ought we know, we are acquainted with but a small part of the productions of an Almighty Power, accompanied with an infinite Wisdom, and excited to communicate it self by an exuberant Goodness. And indeed I see not why we may not say that by the Notion or *Idea* we have of Him, and by the help of some Attributes we already know He has, we may *in general* conceive, that He has other Perfections, that we yet know not *in particular*: since of those Attributes that we do already know, *though* the irrelative ones (if I may so call them) such

such as His Self-existence, Eternity, Simplicity and Independency; may be known by mere speculation, and as it were all at once, by appearing to us as comprehended in the Notion of a Being absolutely perfect; yet there are divers relative Attributes or Perfections, that come to be known but successively, and as it were by experience of what He has actually done in relation to some of His Creatures. As, the Mercy of God was not known by *Adam* himself before his fall; and God's Fidelity or Faithfulness to His promises, as particularly that of sending the *Messias* in the *fulness of time* was not, (not to say could not be) known but in process of time, when some of them came to be fulfill'd. And therefore, since some of God's Perfections require or suppose the respective Natures and Conditions of His Creatures, and the actings of some of them towards Him, as well as some of His towards them; we, that cannot be at all sure that He may not have made many sorts of Creatures, and have

have had divers relations to them according to their several States and Conditions, that we are altogether unacquainted with; cannot know but that some of the Attributes of God exercis'd towards these Creatures, may remain unknown to us.

29. But whether the Attributes, known and unknown, be thought to be more or fewer; it will not be denyed, but that the Natural and genuine *result* of all these Divine Perfections, (which we conceive under distinct Notions, because we are not able to see them at one view, united in God's most simple Essence) must be a most glorious Majesty; that requires the most lowly and prostrate Venerations of all the Great Creatour's Intelligent Works. And accordingly we may observe (from some of the formerly cited Texts) that the Angels, who of all his mere Creatures are the most excellent and knowing, are represented in the Scripture as assiduously employing themselves, not onely in obeying and serving, but in Praising, and Adoring the  
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Divine Majesty. The very Name of *Angel* in the Original Languages of the Old and New Testament, is a Name of Ministry: the Hebrew *Malach* and the Greek *ἄγγελος* signifying properly a *Messenger*. And our Saviour intimates in his most Excellent Pattern of Prayer, that the will of God is done most obsequiously and chearfully in Heaven; since Christians are directed to wish, that their Obedience there pay'd him might be imitated upon Earth. And as they style themselves the Apostles

Rev. XIX. *Fellow-Servants*; so these Celestial  
10. *Envoyes* (if I may so call them)

make no scruple of going upon the meanest Errands, as we would think them; considering rather *by* whom, than *to* whom, or *about* what, they are sent. So the first Angel that we reade of, to have been sent to a particular Person, was employed to

Gen. XXI. *Hagar*, a wandering and fugitive Fe-  
17, &c. male slave, ready to perish for thirst in a Wilderness; to direct her to a Well of Water, and tell her somewhat that concerned her Child. And ano-  
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*Man's Intellect owes to God.* 67

ther Angel is represented as taking the part of an Afs against a false Nu. XXII. Prophet. Nay of this glorious Order <sup>33.</sup> of Creatures in general, the Scripture tells us, that *they are All ministring Spirits, sent forth to Minister for* Heb. I. 14. *them who shall be Heirs of Salvation.*

*Though* the Angels are Creatures so glorious in their Apparitions here below, that they use to strike amazement and veneration, if not Terrour, even into the Excellent Persons they Dan. X. 9, appear to, (as we may learn from <sup>11, 17.</sup> divers passages of the Scripture, where Luk. I. 29. we are told that their presence was accompanied with a surprizing Splendour, and one of them is represented in the *Apocalypse*, as *Inlightening* Revel. XVIII. 1. *the Earth with His Glory: And* *though* their multitude be so great that sometimes the *Myriades* of them, and sometimes the *Legions*, are mention'd; and elsewhere we are told of *Thousand Thousands, and ten Thousand times ten Thousand of them: Yet* these Celestial Courtiers, that in comparison of us Men, are so Glorious,

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ous, as well as Intelligent and spotless, when they appear in multitudes about the Throne of God, (according to that Vision of the Prophet, who told the two Kings of Judah and Israel, that he saw the Lord sitting on his Throne; and all the Host of Heaven standing by Him on His right Hand and on His left,) they stand not to gaze, but as the Prophet Daniel expressly says, to minister. And in Isaiah's Vision, the Seraphims themselves are represented as covering their faces before their Great Maker, Seated on his Elevated Throne. And we may easily guess that their Employment is most humbly to adore and celebrate such dazelling Majesty; by what we are told of their crying one to another *Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory.* This profound respect of the Angels is not to be marvel'd at: since, where esteem springs not from ignorance but knowledge, the greater the ability and opportunities are of having the knowledge clear and heighten'd, the greater

*Vene.*

*Veneration* must be produc'd in an Intelligent Being, for the admired Object: whose Perfections are such, that even an Angelical Intellect cannot fully reach them; since as a line by being never so much extended in length, cannot grow a Surface; so neither can created perfections, be by any *Idea's* so stretch'd as to be amplified into Divine ones; (or *Idea's* equal to them.) And indeed speaking in general, the Creatures are but Umbratile (if I may so speak) and arbitrary Pictures of the great Creator: of divers of whose Perfections though they have some signatures; yet they are but such, as rather give the Intellect rises and occasions to take notice of and contemplate the Divine Originals, than they afford it true Images of them: as a Picture of a Watch or Man, or the name of either of them written with Pen and Ink, does not exhibite a true and perfect *Idea* of a thing (whose internal constitution a surface cannot fully represent) but onely gives occasion to the mind to think of it, and to frame one.

And what I have said of the Creatures in general, holds true of the Angels themselves: who by several prerogatives do indeed much surpass the rest of their fellow Creatures, but yet are but Creatures, and therefore of a Nature infinitely inferior to God's; as, though a Thousand is a far greater Number than ten, and a Million than a Thousand, yet the latter as well as the two former is beyond computation distant from a Number suppos'd to be infinite; since otherwise a finite Number (that by which the lesser differs from the greater) would be able by its accession to make a finite Number become infinite. But to return to what I was saying of the Angels. I thought fit to mention both the Nobleness of their Nature, the splendour of their Apparitions, and the profound *Veneration* and ardent *Devotion* which they pay'd to their Creatour; because we are wont to estimate remote things by comparison, as modern Philosophers tell us, that we judge the rising or setting Sun and Moon, to be greater  
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and more distant from us than when they are nearer the *Meridian*, because when they are in the *Horizon* we consider them as placed beyond Mountains, or long Tracts of Land or Sea, that we know to be *great* Objects, and look upon as *remote* ones; and yet see them interpos'd and consequently nearer than the Celestial Globes. For thus since the Scripture proposes the Angels to our Imitation, the awefull reverence pay'd to the Supreme Being by those Excellent Spirits, who, as *St. Peter* tells us, are greater in Power and Might <sup>2 Pet. XI.</sup> than we, ought to admonish us of <sup>11.</sup> the *ecstatick respect* we Mortals owe Him; and teach us that whensoever we speak either *to* God or *of* Him, we ought to be inwardly affected (and in our outward expressions appear to be so) with the unmeasurable distance there is between a most perfect and Omnipotent Creatour, and a mere impotent Creature; as well as between a most Holy God, and a most finfull Man.

[ 30. If the Conjectures formerly propos'd about Worlds differing from ours may pass for probable, then it will be so too, that God in these other Systemes may have fram'd a Multitude of Creatures, whose Fa-brick and Motions, and consequently whose Properties and Operations, must be very differing from what is usually met with in our World. And the various Contrivances wherein those differences consist will be so many peculiar Instances, as well as Productions, of the *manifold Wisdom* Jer. LI. 19. of the Great *Former of all things*; or (as the Original expression *yotser hackol* will bear,) *Maker of the whole* (Universe.) But to add something now of nearer affinity to what was last said about God's Government of Spirits; how much will this Archi-tecktonick Wisdom (if I may so call it) exerted in framing and regulating an innumerable company of differing Creatures, be recommended; if the other Worlds or *Vortexes* we not long since

since spake of, and the invisible part of ours, (as we may call the Air and *Æther*) be peopled with intelligent, though no visible, inhabitants? For, *though* the Scripture seems not to speak expressly of any more sorts of Spirits, than those good ones that retain the name of (the whole *Genus*) Angels, and the Apostates that are commonly call'd Devils, because these are the two sorts of Spirits that it most concerns us Men, to be inform'd of: yet the Scripture, that in the History of the Creation does not clearly so much as mention the production of Angels, and elsewhere represents them, as well the bad as the good, of very differing *Orders*, (as far as we can guess by the several *Names* it gives them;) the Scripture, I say, does not deny that there are any other sorts of Spirits than those it expressly takes notice of. So that without any affront to it, we may admit there are such, if any probable arguments of it, be suggested to us, either by Reason or Experience. And it seems not very likely, that while our Terra-  
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Eph. VI.  
and XII.  
compar'd  
with Col.  
I. & XVI.

queous Globe, and our Air, are frequented by multitudes of Spirits, all the Celestial Globes, (very many of which do vastly exceed ours in bulk) and all the *Ætherial* or *Fluid part of the World*, (in comparison of which, all the Globes, the Celestial and Terrestrial, put together, are inconsiderable for bulk) should be quite destitute of inhabitants. I have not time to set down the Opinions of the Ancient as well Eastern as Grecian Writers, especially the Pythagoreans and Platonists, to whose Master this sentence is ascribed concerning the multitudes of *Dæmons*, (a name by them not confin'd to evil Spirits) that liv'd in the Superiour part of the World, *Δαίμονες ἀνω γένος*. I will not presume to be positive in declaring the sense of those two expressions which the Scripture employs, *where* speaking of the head of the satanical kingdom, it calls him *the Prince of the power of the Air*, (and the word *Air*, is among the Hebrews taken in a great latitude, and several times us'd for the word *Heaven*) and *where* speak-  
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Eph. II. 2.



ing of the grand Adversaries of the Gospel, it styles the *spiritual wickednesses*, or rather (as the Syriac reads it, *spirits of wickedness*, that is,) *wicked spirits* not in *high* places, as our Translatours have it, but in *Heavenly*. But though, as I was saying, I will not be positive in giving these two Texts such a sense, as may make them *direct arguments* for my Conjecture, yet it seems that if they do not *require*, at least they may well *bear*, an interpretation suitable to my present purpose. And whatever become of the assertions of Heathen Philosophers and Poets, 'tis very considerable what is noted by the Excellent *Grotius*, (who quotes several Hebrew Authorus for it) that 'twas the Opinion of the Jews, that all places from Earth to Heaven, even the Starry Heaven, are full of Spirits. If this be so, the Wisdom and Power of God must reach much farther than we are commonly aware of; since He has Created, and does Govern, such an inestimable multitude of Spiritual Beings, of various kinds, each

*Grot. on Eph. II. 2.*

*On Eph. VI. 12.*

Ep. Jud. 6.

each of them endowed with an Intellect and Will of its own; especially since, for ought we know, many or most of them, and perhaps some whole *orders* of them, are yet in a probational state, wherein they have *free-will* allow'd them; as *Adam* and *Eve* were in *Eden*, and all the *Angels* were, before some of them (as the Scripture speaks) *left their first estate* and their own mansion. And if to these Angelical *communities* we add those others of *Children*, *Idiots* and *Madmen*; of whom, though all be in a sense rational Creatures, yet the *first* community have not attain'd the full use of Reason, for want of age; and the two others cannot exercise that faculty for want of rightly dispos'd Organs; the Wisdom and Power of God in the Divine Government of such various and numerous *communities* of Intellectual Creatures, will to a considering Man appear the more illustrious and wonderfull. ]

31. The distance betwixt the Infinite Creatour and the Creatures, which are but the limited and arbitrary productions of His Power and Will, is so vast, that *all* the Divine Attributes or Perfections do by unmeasurable intervals transcend those faint resemblances of them, that He has been pleas'd to impress, either upon other Creatures, or upon us Men. God's Nature is so Peculiar and Excellent, that there are qualities, which though high vertues in Men, cannot belong to God, or be ascrib'd to Him without derogation: such as are Temperance, Valour, Humility, and divers others; which is the less to be wonder'd at, because there are some vertues (as Chastity, Faith, Patience, Liberality) that belong to Man himself, onely in his mortal and infirm condition. But whatever Excellencies there be that are simply and absolutely such, and so may without disparagement to His Matchless Nature, be ascrib'd to God, such as are Eternity, Independency, Life, Understanding, Will, &c. we may be sure that

Psal. 94.  
9. 10.

that He possesses them; since He is the Original Authour of all the Degrees or Resemblances we men have of any of them. And the Psalmist's Ratiocination is good. *He that planted the Ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the Eye, shall not He see? He that teacheth Man Knowledge, shall not He know?* Since all the Perfections communicated to, or to be found in the Creatures, (whether Men, Angels, or any other) being Emanations of the Divine Excellencies, do as much belong to God, as in a bright day, all the luminous Beams, that are to be found in the Air, belong to the Sun; (in whom they are united, and from whom they all proceeded.) The vast difference then between the Perfections of the Great Creatour, and those that are Analogous to them in the Creatures; reaches to *All* the Perfections that are though in very differing manners, to be found in both; but yet the Humane Understanding, as it values it self upon nothing more than *Wisedom*, and *Knowledge*; so there is nothing that



that it esteems and reverences more in other Beings, and is less willing to acknowledge it self surpass'd in. For which Reason as I have in the foregoing part of this Paper inculcated by more than one way; the Great Superiority of God's Intellect to Man's; so I think it not improper to prosecute the same design; by mentioning to you some few particulars, whereby that Superiority may manifestly appear. We may then consider, that *besides* that God knows an Innumerable company of things that we are altogether unacquainted with, since He cannot but know all the Creatures He has made, whether visible or invisible, corporeal or immaterial; and what He has enabled them to doe; according to that of St. James, *Known unto God are* Aa. XV.  
*all His works from the beginning of the* 18.  
*World.* Nay, since He cannot but know the extent of His own infinite Power, He cannot but know numberless things as possible, that he has not yet made nor perhaps ever will please to make. But to confine my self to things actually existent; besides His corporeal  
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and immaterial Creatures and their faculties or powers whereof we have some kind of notice, and besides perhaps multitudes of other things whereof we have no particular *Idea* or Conjecture; He knows those things whereof we men have also *some* knowledge, in a manner or degree peculiar to himself. As what we know but in part, He knows fully, what we know but dimly, He knows clearly, and what we know but by fallible *Mediums*, he knows most certainly.

32. But the Great *Prerogative* of God's Knowledge, is, that He perfectly knows *Himself*: That Knowledge being not onely *too wonderfull for a man* (as even an inspir'd Person confesses touching himself) but beyond the reach of an Angelical Intellect: since fully to comprehend the Infinite *Nature* of God, no less than an Infinite Understanding is requisite. And for the *Works* of God, even those that are purely Corporeal, (which are therefore the meanest) our knowledge of these is incomparably inferiour to His. For though some  
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modern Philosophers have made ingenious attempts to explain the Nature of things Corporeal, yet their Explications generally *suppose* the present Fabrick of the World, and the laws of motion that are settled in it. But God knows particularly both *why* and *how* the Universal matter was first contriv'd into *this* admirable Universe, rather than a World of any other of the numberless Constructions He could have given it; and both *why* those laws of Motion rather than others were establish'd: and *how* senseless Matter, to whose Nature Motion does not at all belong, comes to be both *put into Motion*, and qualified to *transfer it* according to determinate rules, which it self cannot understand. But when we come to consider the particular and more elaborate Works of Nature; such as the Seeds or Eggs of living Creatures, or the Texture of Quicksilver, Poisons, Antidotes, &c. the Ingenious *Confess* their Ignorance, (about the manner of their Production and Operations) and the Confident *betray*

G                      theirs.

82      *Of the High Veneration*

theirs. But 'tis like we Men know *our selves* better than what is *without us*; but how ignorant we are at home; if the endless disputes of *Aristotle* and his Commentatours and other Philosophers about the Humane Soul, and of Physicians and Anatomists about the Mechanism and Theory of the Humane Body, were not sufficient to manifest it; 'twere easie to be shewn (as it is in another Paper) by the very conditions of the *Union* of the Soul and Body; which being settled at first by God's *arbitrary institution*, and having nothing in all Nature parallel to them, the manner and Terms of that strange Union, is a Riddle to Philosophers, but must needs be clearly known to *Him*, that alone did Institute it, and, (all the while it lasts) does preserve it. And there are several advantages of the Divine Knowledge, above that of Man, that are not here to be pretermitted. For *first*, we Men can perceive and sufficiently attend, but to few things at once; according to the known saying,

The Title of this Paper is, *The Imperfection of Humane Knowledge manifested by its own light.*

*Pluribus*



*Pluribus intentus, Minor est, ad singula sensus.*

And 'tis Recorded as a Wonder of some great men among the Ancients, that they could dictate to two or three Secretaries at once. But God's Knowledge reaches *at once* to all that He can know; His penetrating Eyes pierce quite thorough the whole Creation, at one look; and as an inspir'd Pen-man declares, *There is no Creature that is not manifest in his sight,* Heb. IV. 13. *but all things are naked, and (if I may so render the Greek word) ex-* περὰ πᾶσι σκηνά. *traverted, to His Eyes.* He always sees Incomparably more Objects at one View, than the Sun himself endued with sight could do. For God beholds *at once* all that every one of His Creatures, (whether visible or invisible to us) in the vast Universe, either does or thinks. *Next,* the Knowledge of God is not a *Progressive* or *Discursive* Thing, like that acquir'd by our Ratiocinations; but an *intuitive* Knowledge: since, *though*

we Men by reason of the limitedness and imperfections of our understandings, are fain to make the notice we have of one thing, a step and help to acquire that of another, which to us is less known; as may easily be observ'd even in the Forms of Syllogisms: yet God, whose *Knowledge* as well as His other Attributes are infinitely *Perfect*, needs not know any one thing by the help of another: but knows every thing in it self (as being the Authour of it :) and all things being equally known to Him, He can by looking, if I may so speak, into himself; see there, as in a Divine and Universal Looking-glass, every thing that is knowable most *distinctly* and yet *all at once*. *Thirdly*, God knows mens most secret thoughts and intentions. Whence he is called

1 Chr. 28. *Καθ' ὃν ὁρᾷς*, and the *Searcher of all hearts, that understandeth all the Imaginations of the Thoughts*. Nay, he knows mens *Thoughts*, *afar off*, and even never vented thoughts, which the Man himself may not know. For 1 Joh. 3 20. *not onely St. John says, that if our heart*

*heart Condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things; but God enabled Daniel to declare to* Dan. II. 5, *Nebuchadnezzar, the whole Series of* <sup>31.</sup> *the Prophetick Dream, whereof that Monarch's own memory could not retrieve any part. And here give me leave to observe, (what perchance you have not minded) that even of a thing that happens to a Man's self, and is of a Nature capable to make the most vivid impressions on him; God's Knowledge may surpass His: Since St. Paul speaking of his being caught up into Paradise, after having twice said, Whether in the Body I cannot* <sup>2 Cor. 12.</sup> *tell, or whether out of the Body, I* <sup>2, 3, 4.</sup> *cannot tell, he both times subjoyns, that God knows. Our knowledge of our selves, as well as that of those other Creatures that are without us, being so defective, the confidence of some that dare pretend to know God fully, by the Light of their Natural Reason, will not hinder me from taking hence a Rise to ask this short question; How imperfect must mere Philosophers knowledge of God's Nature*

*be since they know Him but by His Works; and know His Works themselves but very imperfectly!* The other and *fourth* Conspicuous Prerogative of the Divine *Knowledge*, is the Prescience of future Contingents, that depend upon the Determinations and Actions of *free* Agents. For *we* Men are so far from being able to stretch our knowledge to the Discovery of that sort of Events, that the greatest Clerks have try'd their Wits in vain to discover *how God himself* can fore-know them; and therefore too many, even among Christians, deny that He *can*; though by divers accomplish'd predictions recorded in Scripture, it manifestly appears, that He *does*.

33. When I consider the transcendent *Excellency*, and the numerous *Prerogatives* of the Deity, I cannot without Wonder, as well as Trouble, observe, that Rational Men professing Christianity, and many of them Studious too, should wilfully and perhaps contemptuously, neglect to acquire or reflect on, those Notices that are apt to increase their knowledge of God,  
and



and consequently their *Veneration* for Him. To aspire to a farther knowledge of God, that we may the better adore Him, is a great part both of Man's Duty and His happiness. God who has put into Men an innate desire of knowledge, and a faculty to distinguish the degrees of Excellency in differing Notices, and to relish those most, that best deserve it, and has made it His Duty to search and enquire after God, and to love Him above all things, would not have done this, if He had not known that those that make a right Use of their faculties, must find Him to be the Noblest Object of the Understanding, and that which most merits their Wonder and Veneration. And indeed what can be more suitable to a Rational Creature, than to employ Reason to contemplate that Divine Being, which is both the Authour of its Reason, and the Noblest Object, about which it can possibly be employ'd? The knowledge of some dead Language, or some old rusty Medal, or the Opinions and Customs of

some Nations or Sects, that did not perhaps Reason nor Live any better than we doe now, are thought worthy of curiosity, and even of the laborious industry of learned Men; and the study of things merely corporeal, gains Men the Honourable title of *Philosophers*. But whatever these Objects of inquiry be in themselves, 'tis certain the greatest Discoveries we can make of them are but trifles, in comparison of the *Excellency of the Knowledge* of God, which does as much surpass that of His Works, as He Himself does Them. And 'tis the Prerogative of His Nature, to be infinitely above all that He has made; whether we contemplate the works of Nature, or those of Art, whereof the former are under another Name, His more immediate Works; and the others the Effects of one of His Works; and by consequence are originally His, though produc'd by the intervention of Man. And though it be most true, that on the Corporeal World, God has been pleas'd to stamp such impresses of His Power,

Power, Wisdom and Goodness, as have justly exacted the Admiration even of Philosophers, yet the Great Authour of the World is Himself Incomparably Superiour to all His Workmanship, insomuch that, though He could have made, and always will be able to make, Creatures more Perfect than those He has made, by Incomputable degrees of perfection; yet the Prerogative of His Nature will keep Him necessarily Superiour to the excellentest Creatures He can make, since the very condition of a Creature hinders it from being (to name now no other of the Divine Attributes) Self existent and Independent. 'Tis therefore methinks a sad thing, that we Men should grudge to spend now and then a few hours in the contemplation and internal Worship of that most Glorious and Perfect Being, that continually employs the Devotion of Angels themselves. This I judge probable from hence, that those blessed Spirits are represented in the Scripture as Celebrating with joyfull Songs and Accla-

clamations, the Nativity of the World, and I think they may well be supposed, to have an ardent desire to obtain a farther knowledge of God Himself. Since, as an Apostle assures us, they earnestly desire to look into the truths contain'd in the Gospel, and the Dispensations of God towards frail and mortal Men.

34. I know I may be told that *Scrutator Majestatis*, &c. and that 'tis a dangerous thing to be inquisitive about the Nature of God. But, not to urge that the Latin sentence is taken but out of an Apocryphal Book; I answer that the *Secret things* of God that are to be left to Himself, seem to be His unrevealed purposes and decrees and His most abstruse Essence or Substance, the scrutiny whereof I readily acknowledge not to belong to us. But I think there is a great difference between contemplating God out of a saucy curiosity, merely to know somewhat that is not common of Him, and doing it out of an humble desire by a farther knowledge of Him to heighten our  
Reve-



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Reverence and Devotion towards Him. 'Tis an effect of Arrogance to endeavour, or so much as hope, to comprehend the Divine Perfections so as to leave nothing in them unknown to the enquirer, but to aspire to know them farther and farther, that they may proportionably appear more and more admirable and lovely in our eyes, is not onely an excusable but a laudable curiosity. The Scripture in one place exhorts us *to grow* 2 Pet. III. not onely *in Grace*, but *in the Knowledge of Christ*; and in another *to add* 2 Pet. I. 5. *to our Vertue Knowledge*; and when *Moses* beg'd to be bless'd with a nearer Exod. 33. and more particular view of God, 18. though part of His request was refus'd, because the grant of it was unfutable to his mortal State, and perhaps must have prov'd fatal to him whilst he was in it; yet God vouchsafed so Gracious a return to his petition, as shews He was not displeas'd with the supplicant. No action or suffering of His having procured for Exod. 34. him so glorious a view, as was then 5, 6, &c. vouchsafed to his holy curiosity. And that

that we may aspire to great degrees of knowledge, even at those supernatural Objects that we cannot adequately know, we may learn from Eph. 3. 18. *St. Paul*, who prays that his *Ephesians*, as all true Christians, may be able to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which, says he in the very next words, passeth knowledge. Supposing it then lawfull to contemplate God, not with design to pry into His Decrees and Purposes, nor to Dogmatize in points controverted among the learned about His Nature and Attributes, but to excite in our selves the sentiments which His indisputable Perfections, are by a more attentive view qualified to produce: I consider that the Devout Contemplation of God, besides other great advantages that it brings the mind, insomuch that the Exod. 34. Humane understanding, like *Moses* 39, 30, &c. in the Mount, does by an assiduous converse with God acquire a lasting luminousness. Besides this, I say, and the improving influence that this happy

happy Conversation may have upon the graces and vertues of the mind, I take it to be one of the most delightfull exercises, that the Soul is capable of, on this side Heaven. 'Tis generally acknowledg'd that admiration is one of the most pleasing affections of the mind, which sometimes when the Object deserves it, is so possess'd thereby, as to forget all other things, or leave them unregarded as it often happens in Masks and other pompous and surprizing shews or spectacles; and as upon a better ground it happen'd to *St. Peter*, when being ravish'd with the glorious transfiguration of his and our Master upon Mount *Tabor*, he exclaim'd that 'twas good for them to be there, and talk'd of building Tabernacles for those that had Heavenly Mansions; being so transported with the ravishing sight, that the Evangelist expressly Notes that *he knew not what he said*. Now; *Lu. 9. 23.* the pleasure that admiration gives, being usually proportionate to the uncommon Nature and indearing Circumstances of the thing admired,  
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how can any admiration afford such a contentment, as that which has God Himself for its Object, and in Him the most singular and the most Excellent of all Beings. The wonder produc'd in us by an humble and attentive Contemplation of God, has two main advantages, above the admiration we have for any of His Works, or of our own. For first when we admire Corporeal things, how noble and pretious soever they be, as Stars and Gemms, the contentment that accompanies our wonder is allay'd by a kind of secret reproach grounded on that very wonder; since it argues a great imperfection in our understandings, to be pos'd by things that are but Creatures, as well as we, and which is worse, of a nature very much inferiour to ours. Whereas 'tis no disparagement at all for a humane, and consequently a finite Intellect to be possessed with wonder, though it were heightened to amazement, or astonishment, by the Contemplation of that most Glorious and Infinitely Perfect Being, which must necessarily exceed



exceed the adequate comprehension of any Created Intellect. But I consider that there is a farther and much greater (which is the second) advantage of the admiration of God, above that of other things, for other Objects having but a bounded Nature and commonly but some one thing fit to be wondred at, our admiration of them is seldom lasting, but after a little familiarity with them, first languishes and then ceases. But God is an Object, whose Nature is so very Singular, and whose Perfections are so immense, that no Assiduity of considering Him, can make Him cease to be admirable, but the more knowledge we obtain of Him, the more Reason we find to admire Him. So that there may be a perpetual vicissitude of our happy acquiescences of farther degrees of knowledge, and our eager desires of new ones. Because we give Him but one Name, we are apt to look upon Him as but one Object of speculation; but, though God be indeed but one in Essence or Nature, yet such is His immensity,  
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and if I may so speak, Fecundity, that He is unspeakably Various in the capacity of an Object. Thus Heaven goes under one Name, but contains so many fixt Stars and Planets, and they by their diversity of Motions exhibit so many *Phænomena*, that though they have employed the curiosity of Astronomers for many Ages, yet our times have in the Celestial part of the World, made discoveries as considerable, if not as numerous, as all those of the Ancients; and as our Optick Glasses have detected many fixt Stars, and divers Planets that were unknown to former times, so our Navigatours, by their Voyages beyond the Line, have discovered divers whole constellations in the Southern Hemisphere. So that though Heaven be an Object, that has been perpetually and conspicuously exposed to Mens view and curiosity, for some thousands of years, yet it still affords new Subjects for their wonder: and I scarce doubt but by the farther improvement of Telescopes, Posterity will have its curiosity gratified

tified by the discovery both of new Constellations, and of new Stars, in those that are known to us already. We need not therefore fear our admiration of God should expire, for want of Objects fit to keep it up. That boundless Ocean contains a variety of excellent Objects, that is as little to be exhausted as the Creatures that live in our sublunary Ocean or lie on the shores that limit it, can be numbered. To the Wonderfull Excellency of God, may be justly apply'd that Notion, which *Aristotle* lays down as a kind of definition of Infinite, namely that 'tis that of which how much soever one takes, there still remains more to be taken. If the Intellect should for ever make a farther and farther Progress in the knowledge of the Wonders of the Divine Nature, Attributes and Dispensations; yet it may still make discoveries of fresh things worthy to be admired; as in an infinite Series or row of ascending numbers, though you may still advance to greater and greater numbers; yet all that you can doe by that

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Progress, is to go farther and farther from the first and least term of the progression, (which in our case answers to the smallest degree of our knowledge of God) without ever *reaching*, or which may seem strange, but is true, so much as *approaching* to an Infinite number, (in case there were any such) or even to the greatest of all numbers: as will be acknowledged by those that have look'd into the properties of progressions *in Infinitum*.

35. The two advantages I come from mentioning which the admiration of God has in point of delightfulness joyn'd to the other advantages of our contemplation of Him, have I hope persuaded you that they are very much wanting to themselves, as well as to the Duty they owe their Maker, that refuse or neglect to give their thoughts so pleasing, as well as Noble, an employment. And I am apt to think upon this account in particular, that Reason is a greater blessing to other Men, than to Atheists, who whilst they are such cannot employ it about God, but with  
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disbelief or terrour; and that on this very score, *Epicurus* was far less happy than *Plato*, since whereas the latter was oftentimes as it were swallowed up in the Contemplation of the Deity; The former had no such glorious Object, to possess Him with an equally rational and delightful admiration.

36. But now, (to apply this to the scope of this whole discourse) though so pure and spiritual a pleasure is a very allowable attractive; to elevate our thoughts, to the most glorious and amiable of Objects, yet it ought to be both the design and the effect of our admiration of God, to produce in us less unworthy *Idea's*, and more honourable and reverent thoughts, of that Wonderfull and unparallel'd Being. Of whom the more we discover, the more we discern Him to be Superiour to all His Works, and particularly to our selves, who are not of the highest Order of them, and who, as mere men, are scarce in any thing more Noble, than in the capacity and permission

of knowing, admiring and adoring God. Which he that thinks a mean and melancholy employment, might be to seek for happiness in Heaven itself, if so unqualified a Soul could be admitted there. The genuine effect of a nearer or more attentive view of Infinite excellency, is a deep sense of our own great inferiority, to it, and of the great Veneration and fear we owe (to speak in a Scripture phrase) to this glorious and fearfull Name, (that is, Object) *The Lord our God*. And accordingly when God had spoken to *Job* out of the Whirlewind, and declared somewhat to him of the Divine greatness; This holy Philosopher much alters his style, and confesses that in his former discourses of God, he had *uttered what he understood not, things two wonderful for him, which he knew not*. And having thereupon implored instruction from God, he declares how fit a nearer knowledge of *Him* is to make a man have low thoughts of *himself*; *I have heard of thee*, (says he to his Maker) *by the hearing of the*

Deut. 28.  
58.

Job. 42.  
3, 4, 5, 6.

*the Ear; but now mine Eye seeth thee: wherefore (infers he) I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.*

I know you may look upon a good part of this excursion as a digression; but if it be, 'twill quickly be forgiven, if you will pardon me for it, as easily as I can pardon my self, for finding my self in *David's* case, when he said, *my heart was hot within me,* Psal. 39. 3. *while I was musing the fire burn'd, as he said, Then spake I with my tongue.* So I was content to let my Pen run on in so pleasant and Noble a Theme, and endeavour to excite, at least in my self, such a well grounded admiration of God, as may perhaps be a part of my *Reasonable service* to Rom. 12. 2. Him, or rational Worship of Him. God is pleas'd to declare *that he that* Psal. 50. 23. *offers* (or as 'tis in the original *Sacrifices*) *praise, glorifies him,* and the Scripture expressly styles our devotion *Sacrifices of praise.* And we Heb. 13. 15. may well suppose that if the *Calves of our lips*, as our Celebrations of God are somewhere call'd, are encouraged

by God, those mental offerings that consist in High and Honourable thoughts of Him, and in lowly humble sentiments of our selves in the view of His Excellency, will not be less acceptable to Him: such *re-*  
 Heb 12.28. *verence and devout fear* (to speak with the inspired writer to the Hebrews)  
 Joh. 41.23. being indeed a kind of *adoring God in Spirit and in Truth*. And he that is so employed, may with contentment compare his condition to that of *Zacharias*, when it was said of  
 Luk. 1. 9. him that *his lot was to burn Incense*, to offer up to God the noblest and purest sort of the Legal Sacrifices. But that I may not too far digress, I shall onely add, That I think myself very worthily, as well as delightfully employed, when I am seeking after and bringing together what helps I can, to *greaten* as much as I am able, those sentiments of Wonder and Veneration for God, that I am sure can never be great enough. Especially since the more we know and adore that Infinite Excellency and Exuberant Fountain of Goodness,  
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the more influence and advantages we derive from it : agreeably to which God, is introduced in the Scripture, saying of one of His adorers, to whom in the same Psalm many other blessings are also promised, *because he has set his love upon me, Psal. 91. therefore will I deliver him : I will set him on high because he has known my Name.* <sup>14, 15, 16.</sup>

We have generally, through Inco-  
gitancy, or Vice, or Prejudices, or  
the Majesty and abstruseness of the  
Subject, so great an Indisposition to  
excite and cherish in our selves an  
awfull Veneration for God, and a  
studious Contemplation of His ado-  
rable Attributes; that it seemed no  
more than needfull to employ variety  
of *Arguments*, drawn from different  
Topicks, to *engage* our own and  
other Mens minds, and repeated *In-  
culcations* to *press* them, to an Exer-  
cise, which they neither are, nor are  
willing to be, acquainted with. This  
Consideration will, I hope, be my  
Apology, if in the present Tract I  
lay hold on several occasions, and

make use of diversities of Discourse, to recommend a Duty, that does very much both merit and need to be not onely proposed but inculcated. And yet I will not any farther lengthen this foregoing Excursion, (as I hope you will think it, rather than a mere Digression,) nor any longer forget, that when I begun it, I was discoursing of the great caution and profound respect, with which we ought to speak of God.

37. 'Twere tedious to insist on all the Arguments that may be brought of the Immense Inferiority of Man's Intellect to God's. And therefore I shall here content my self to illustrate some part of it, by a *Simile* borrow'd from the superiour and inferiour Luminaries of Heaven: Humane reason, in comparison of the Divine Intellect, being but like the Moon in reference to the Sun. For *as* the Moon at best is but a small Star in comparison of the Sun, and has but a dim light, and that too, but borrow'd; and has her *wane*, as well as her *full*, and is often subject to Eclipses, and always blemished

blemished with dark spots: So the light of Humane reason is but very small and dim, in comparison of His Knowledge, that is truly called in Scripture the *Fountain*, as well as the *Father*, of Light; and this Light it self which shines in the Humane Intellect, is derived from the irradiation it receives from God, *in whose* *Light 'tis that we see light.* And this, as 'tis but a communicated light, is subject to be encreas'd, impair'd, and oftentimes to be almost totally eclipsed; either by the darkening fumes of lusts or passions, or the suspension of the provok'd Donor's beams; and *in its best estate*, is always blemished with imperfections, that make it incapable of an entire and uniform Illumination.

Psal. 36. 9.  
Jam. 1. 17.

Psal. 36. 9.

Upon these and divers other Considerations, I, for my part, think it becomes us *Men*, to use an awfull Circumspection; not onely when we make Philosophical Inquiries or Scholastick Disputes about God, that is, when we presume to *discourse of Him*; but when we solemnly design

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*to praise Him*, for 'tis one thing to say *true* things of God, and another to say things *worthy* of God: Our *Idea's* of Him may be the best we are able to frame, and yet may far better express the greatness of *our veneration* for Him, than the immensity of *His Perfection*: and even those Notions of them that may be worthy of the most Intelligent of Men, will fall extremely short of being worthy of the incomprehensible God. The brightest and least unlike *Idea* we can frame of God, is infinitely more inferiour in reference to Him, than a *Parhelion* is in reference to the Sun. For, though that Meteor appear a splendid and sublime thing, and have so much resemblance to the Sun (without whose own beams it is not produced) as to be readily perceived to be his image, exclusively to that of any other: yet residing in a Cloud, whose Station is near the Earth, 'tis by an immense distance *beneath* the Sun; and is no less *inferiour* to him in bigness and in splendour; as well as in many other Attributes. He  
has



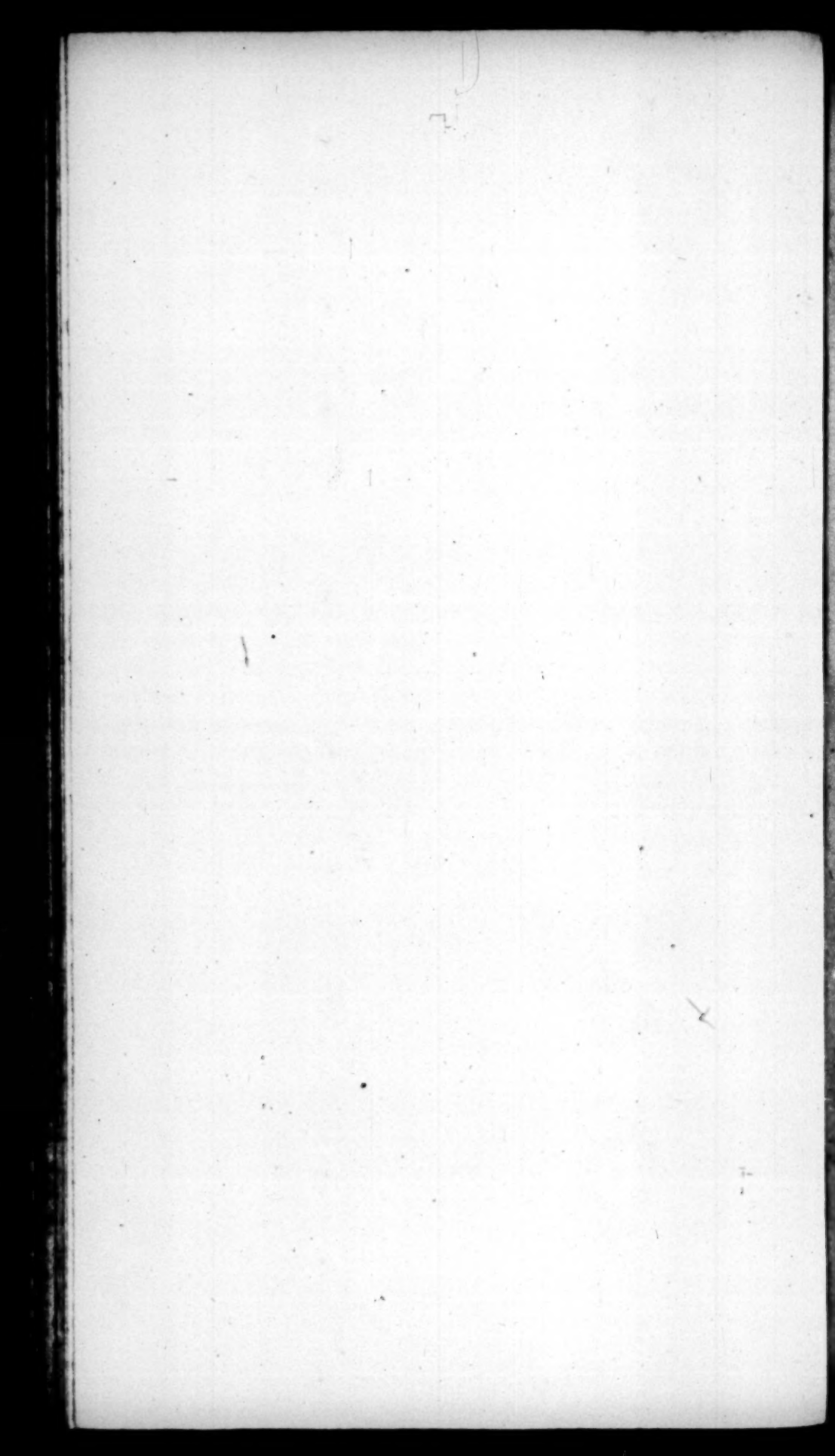
has in my Opinion the truest Veneration for God, not who can set forth His Excellencies and Prerogatives in the most high and pompous expressions: but he who willingly has a deep and real sense of the unmeasurable inferiority of himself and his best *Idea's*, to the unbounded and unparallel'd Perfections of his Maker. And here Indignation prompts me to this reflexion, that if [Since] even our Hymns and Praises of God the Supreme Being deserve our blushes and need His pardon, what confusion will one day cover the faces of those, that do not onely speak slightly and carelessly, but oftentimes contemptuously, and perhaps drollingly, of that Supreme and Infinitely Perfect Being, to whom they owe those very Faculties and that witt which they so ungratefully, as well as impiously misemploy? And indeed, such transcendent Excellencies as the Divine ones *must* be, might justly discourage us from offering so much as to Celebrate them, if Infinite Goodness were not one of them. I shall not therefore allow my self  
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the presumption of pretending to make as it were a Panegyrick of God, of whom 'tis very easie to speak too much, though it be not possible to say enough: contenting my self with an humble Adoration of Perfections whereof my utmost praises would rather express my own weakness than their excellency: since of this Ineffable Object the highest things that can be expressed in words, must therefore fall short because words cannot express them. Which assertion, though it be a Paradox, yet I think it is not truely an Hyperbole. For we are not able to determine and reach, so much as in our thoughts, the greatest of all possible numbers: since we may conceive that any one (whatsoever it be) that can be pitched upon or assigned, may be doubl'd, trebl'd, or multiply'd by some other Number; or may be but the Root of a Square or Cubical Number. By which instance (that perhaps you have not met with) you may perceive that any determinate conception that we can have (for example) of God's Immen-

mentality (to specific now no other of His Attributes) must therefore be short of it, because it is a determined or bounded conception. 'Tis fit therefore that I should at length put limits to my discourse, since none can be put to the Extent or Perfections of my Subject.

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## *The Conclusion.*

THE result of what hath been said in the past Excursion, will, I hope, amount to a sufficient justification of what hath been said at the beginning of this Discourse, about *The High Veneration our Intellectuals owe to God*. For Since we may well think *in general*, that he hath divers Attributes and Perfections of which we have *no knowledge* or suspicion *in particular*; and Since of those Attributes of His that are the most manifest to us, as His *Power* and *Wisdom*, we have but a *very dim and narrow knowledge*; and may clearly perceive that there is in these an unbounded Extent of Perfection, beyond all that we can evidently and distinctly discern of them: how unfit  
must

must such imperfect Creatures, as we are, be to talk hastily and confidently of God, as of an Object that our contracted understandings grasp, as they are able (or pretend to be so) to do other Objects! And how deep a sense ought we to have of our Inestimable inferiority, to a Being, in reference to whom, both our ignorance and our knowledge ought to be the Parents of Devotion! Since our necessary ignorance proceeds from the numerousness, and Incomprehensibleness of His (many of them undiscovered) Excellencies, and our knowledge qualifies us but to be the more Intelligent Admirers of His conspicuous Perfections.

If we duly and Impartially consider these and the like things, we may clearly perceive, how great an effect and mark of ignorance, as well as presumption, it is, for us Mortals to talk of God's Nature and the Extent of His Knowledge, as of things that we are able to look through, and to Measure. Whereas we ought when-

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whenever we speak of God, and of His Attributes, to stand in great awe, lest we be guilty of any misapprehension or misrepresentation of him, that we might by any wariness and humility of ours have avoided; and lest by an over-weening Opinion of our selves, we presume that we have a *perfect*, or at least a *sufficient*, knowledge of every thing in God, whereof we have *some* knowledge; since this at the least consists in such Notions, as are rather suited to our limited faculties, than any way equal to His Boundless Perfections.

That Higher Order of Intellectual Beings the Angels; though their minds be so Illuminated, and their Knowledge so extensive, the Angels themselves, I say, are in the Scripture affirmed to *be desirous to pry into the Mysteries of the Gospel*: whence we may guess, how far they are from penetrating to the bottom of what the Scripture calls *the Depths* 1 Cor. 13. *of God*; and how much farther they 10. are from comprehending the Infinite  
I Nature

Nature of God. And accordingly when in the (formerly mentioned) Majestick Vision, that appeared to  
 Isa. 6. the Prophet *Isaiah*, they are set forth as Attendants about the Throne of God, they are represented *covering*  
 Isa. 6. 2. *their faces with their wings*, as not able to support, or not presuming to Gaze on, the Dazling Brightness of the Divine Majesty. And shall we poor sinfull Mortals, who are infinitely beneath Him, not onely by the degeneracy and *sinfulness* of our *lives*, but even by the imperfection and *inferiority* of our *nature*; presume to talk forwardly or irreverently of the Divine Essence and Perfections, without considering the immense distance betwixt God and us; and how unable, as well as unworthy, we are to penetrate the recesses of that Inscrutable as well as Adorable Nature, and how much better it would become us, when we speak of Objects so much above us, to imitate the just humility of that Inspired Poet, that  
 \* Psal. 136. 6. said \* *Such Knowledge is too Wonderful for me; it is High I cannot attain*



*The Conclusion.*

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*attain unto it : And joyn in that  
seemingly, and yet but seemingly,  
Lofty Celebration of God, † That † Nche. 9.  
His Glorious Name is Exalted above  
all Blessing and Praise.*

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T H E E N D.

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